

REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Applicants have cancelled claims 1-13 and have added claims 14-24. Therefore, claims 14-24 are currently pending in this application. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 14-24 do not add new matter and have proper antecedent basis in the Specification.

Claims 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; claims 1-9 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,804,090 to Iwasaki et al. ("the Iwasaki reference") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,389,198 to Koide et al. ("the Koide reference"); claims 1-9 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the Iwasaki reference in view of the Koide reference and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,131,978 to O'Neill ("the O'Neill reference"); and claims 1-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent No. 5,738,757 to Burns et al. ("the Burns reference") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,033,997 to Perng ("the Perng reference").

II. THE § 112 REJECTIONS

Applicants have cancelled claims 1-13, effectively mooting all rejections of these claims. Furthermore, Applicants note that the amended specification and the newly introduced claims 14-24 address the Examiner's comments made in connection with the § 112 rejections of claims 1-13.

II. THE § 103(a) REJECTIONS

As stated above, Applicants have cancelled claims 1-13, effectively mooting all § 103(a) rejections of these claims. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that new

claims 14-24 are not obvious over any one or combination of the Iwasaki, Koide, O'Neill, Burns, and Perng references, for the reasons stated below.

New claim 14, from which claims 15-24 ultimately depend, recites in pertinent part, "providing at least one of the positive areas with a second passivation layer having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the first passivation layer." It is respectfully submitted that the Iwasaki, Koide, O'Neill, Burns, and Perng references, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose the above-mentioned feature.

For at least the above-noted reason, Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 14-24 are patentable over the asserted combinations of two or more of Iwasaki, Koide, O'Neill, Burns, and Perng references.

III. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 14-24 are currently in condition for allowance. Prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are therefore earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

The paragraph beginning on page 2, line 7, has been amended as follows:

Figure 1 shows a first embodiment of the method according to the present invention as a two-sided one-step etching process. Part 1 shows a cross-sectional view of wafer 20, which made be made of a single material, with a front side 22, a back side 23 and an edge area 21. The wafer is shown only partially, continuing toward the left, where it is delimited by another edge area (not shown). A nitride layer is applied to the wafer by gas phase deposition. Then the nitride layer is structured by a conventional photoresist technique, with the resist being applied to the nitride layer, exposed selectively and then developed; (when using a positive resist) the exposed part of the resist is next removed, then the exposed part of the nitride layer is removed, usually by a plasma etching process, and finally the remaining unexposed part of the resist is removed, e.g., by ashing the resist in an oxygen plasma. Nitride structuring is performed first on the front side of the wafer, as shown in Part 1; this structuring yields structured nitride layer 25. Unstructured nitride layer 24 is still imaged on the back side.